



### **Our Mission**

Zion Lutheran School provides a Christ centered approach to education. This education nurtures the child's faith, equipping him/her to use and share that faith on a daily basis.

### **Our Vision**

That every child knows Jesus as his or her personal Lord and Savior

Friday, March 27th, 2020

*Zion Lutheran School Closure - Extension  
March 30th-April 7th*

Parents of Zion Lutheran School,

I know that right now I am addressing a very hardworking, exhausted group of people. Whether our current situation is viewed by you as easy, manageable, or extremely difficult, one thing is for sure - it is a transition and a major change for every single student, family, and staff member in the Zion community. So, I want to begin with what Zion believes is the most important piece of this puzzle - your family.

After two weeks, one thing has become very clear - our Zion families are all very uniquely different, but all are amazingly capable. Every parent is working...really hard - working remotely, some still going in to work, working to keep your house clean, your toilet paper stocked, your children occupied all while managing your children's learning at home. Every parent is employing a unique and different set of skills, gifts, talents, and abilities to lead their family through this time. Every child learns uniquely, has a different temperament, and reacts differently to the changes that have been so quickly (and without warning) in their worlds. Our Zion families are all very unique, and our school community is better and stronger because of your families.

It is for this reason I must say to you that we don't know every family's situation, but we do know that you can structure your child's learning in any way that makes sense for your situation. You are under a lot of pressure. We don't expect you to know how to homeschool your children while also handling everything else that is required of you to care and provide for your family. Right now, we just want to make sure that you have what you need to love and care for your children.

Because we are invested in your children's well-being - academic, spiritual, physical, social, and emotional -, and because we love and care about your family, we are here to equip and empower you in whatever way you and your children need. We have never done this before, and we may not always get it right, so we rely on your constructive and positive feedback to guide us to our goal of helping you and providing what we can to meet your children's needs. I am encouraging our teachers to ask for it, and I encourage you to reach out to our teachers when you have questions or need help with your child's learning.

Thank you for being so positive, so encouraging, and so open to figuring this out with us. During these last two weeks, God has shown that He is alive in our Zion community. He is working in and through this difficult situation to bring about His good pleasing, and perfect will for our students, your families, our staff, and our church and school. Join me in praying every day for the people of our community. God is good, and we can trust in His promises.

In His Service,

Mrs. Ananda Baron, principal

*See the next pages for our revised goals and plans through the extended closure.*

## OUR MAIN GOALS

1. **Zion's mission and vision** are to keep Christ at the center of all learning and development for our students. In an unprecedented and uncertain time, we want to help families navigate life for their children from a Christian perspective. Our primary objective is to care for you and your children academically, physically, emotionally, and spiritually.
2. **Keep it simple** - We recognize that each family's plan for providing care and educational time for students is going to look different. We want our plans to be simple enough for any family to follow, so adapt it to your family's needs.
3. **Communicate Clearly & Concisely** - We want to keep you informed and stay connected to students without overwhelming you. We are improving this for you.
4. **Help you care for your family** in the way that you need to

## K-8 ACADEMIC GOALS OF ZLS

- Students should engage in reading as frequently and as often as possible.
- Teachers have begun offering opportunities to connect with students face to face (using ZOOM mostly). Since these are done "live", they are not required. They can be recorded so students can view when available.
- Continue to Review to prevent students' skills from regressing (especially in math and lower grade reading).
- New skills and concepts will be introduced sparingly and with thoughtful and detailed planning that includes the method new information is shared with students and what students can do if they do not understand the new content.
  - ◆ Our Shurley English series offers an online portal to assist students and parents. Grades 2-5 are researching this as a helpful option.
- Students should have no more than 3 activities per subject (math, reading/literature, English, history/social studies, science) in a week.
- All work will be clearly communicated by the teacher as "required" or "optional" to help you and your students prioritize.
- Students and parents should be able to choose the pace at which "required" assignments are completed. We do this because we are not aware of each family's arrangements for child care. Teachers will communicate with parents and students individually if assistance is needed to complete work.
- Teachers are focused on providing every opportunity to help students succeed in their unique at-home learning environment. We recognize that this is not the same as learning in a classroom environment, thus, the expectations cannot be the same.

## PRESCHOOL UPDATES

Beginning next week, preschool students and their families will be able to see their teacher and classmates through Zoom Video “circle time” conferencing. Video conferencing will add a new dimension to our communication and our ability to teach during the “Stay at Home” order from Governor Pritzker.

The ability to interact with students using video conferencing will hopefully allow us to exchange ideas and have a collaborative dialogue about various topics. We believe that students and parents would benefit greatly from attending the conference together; however, we understand that this may not be possible for all families. For families who are not able to attend the live sessions, a link of the recorded session will be shared by the teacher.

Preschool students and families are invited to attend Zoom conferences on the days the student regularly attends Zion preschool. For example, if your child is enrolled in preschool on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, your Zoom conferences take place on those days. Specific times will be sent by the preschool teachers.

We are so excited to have the technology and the opportunity to interact with our students during this time we are away from school!

## COMMUNICATION GOALS OF ZLS STAFF

- You will receive a daily email from the school with a Family Devotion, activity, and prayer for the day or night. This will serve as our religion curriculum for families.
- The daily email will contain any updates regarding school closure and school activities that are being postponed, rescheduled, or cancelled along with other important school information.
- Teachers are expected to communicate with homeroom families *at least* 2 times a week via email. Communications should include:
  - ◆ Reminders for work
  - ◆ Additional resources
  - ◆ Updates on new academic work
  - ◆ Emphasis of school office messages
- Teachers have been asked to be “on call” from 8am-3pm every day. They should respond quickly to your emails and other messages with questions.
- Parents are encouraged to share questions and ask for assistance from teachers whenever it is needed. They can help parents make adjustments to work and to schedules.

## OTHER INFORMATION

- **Schedule Suggestion** - Also attached to this email is a great resource for scheduling a learning day at home (found online by our staff & shared with our initial March 15th letter). We made a few adjustments to it before sharing with you (and I, as a mom, have made more adjustments as we've worked to establish a schedule in our house...which still isn't perfected).
- **Calendar Changes** - cancellations, postponements, and rescheduled events as of today. Stay tuned for more.
  - **Wednesday, April 8th** - currently set by the state of Illinois as the return-to-school date. This is also the first day of our scheduled Easter break. No official changes have been decided on at this time, but this is a discussion item for staff and school board.
  - **Friday, May 1st** - start of the *now-online* ZLS Auction

The staff of Zion Lutheran Church and School are trusting in and depending on God's guidance to care for our students, staff, and families in the best possible way. As Hebrews 13:8 tells us, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever”. Regardless of what is happening around us, God's love and all His other promises to us remain constant. His steadfastness brings me peace, and I pray that it does for you, too. Trust that no matter what happens, God is on the throne, and He is in control.